

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0041

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, FR

SUBJECT: DOT INVITATION TO TRANSPORT MINISTER

REF: PARIS 14368

1. DURING CONVERSATION JUNE 18 WITH COLLET, DIRECTOR OF SURFACE TRANSPORTATION, HE RAISED SUBJECT OF POSSIBLE ISSUANCE OF INVITATION FOR US VISIT BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT CAVAILLE. RECALLING INVITATIONS PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO GUENA AND ACHILLE-FOULD, COLLET ASSUMED THAT INVITATION WOULD PROBABLY NOW BE EXTENDED TO CAVAILLE. IF SO, COLLET NOTED THAT CAVAILLE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO TRAVEL BEFORE THIS FALL AT THE EARLIEST.

2. WE NOTED THAT WE HAD RECOMMENDED TO WASHINGTON (REFTEL) THAT ANY RENEWAL OF EARLIER INVITATION FOR FRENCH MINISTERIAL VISIT TO US BE DEFERRED UNTIL NEW MINISTER (CAVAILLE) HAD SETTLED INTO HIS JOB AND WAS MORE RELAXED THAN AT PRESENT WHEN HE WAS DOUBTLESS BESET WITH ALL KINDS OF PRIORITY PROBLEMS. COLLET FULLY AGREED, ADDING THAT CAVAILLE HAD SUCH A BACKLOG OF PROBLEMS WITH WHICH TO DEAL THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHICH WAY TO TURN, AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR CAVAILLE EVEN TO THINK OF PLANNING FOR US VISIT UNTIL AFTER SUMMER VACATION PERIOD. COLLET ALSO

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SAID THAT CAVAILLE, RESPECTING WISH OF PRESIDENT

GISCARD D'ESTAING FOR SMALLER MINISTERIAL CABINETS, HAD FAR FEWER PERSONS IN HIS CABINET THAN DID ACHILLE-FOULD, WHICH FURTHER CONTRIBUTED TO MINISTER'S OWN WORKLOAD.

3. COMMENT: LANSALOT-BASOU OF FRENCH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON IS QUITE CAPABLE OF RAISING WITH OR WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS QUESTION OF REVIVING VISIT BY EARLY ISSUANCE OF INVITATION TO CAVAILLE. COLLET READING CONFIRMS OUR OWN AS REPORTED REFTEL, HOWEVER, THUS SUPPORTING OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT WE HOLD UP ON INVITATION FOR AWHILE ASSUMING THERE IS INTEREST IN EVENTUALLY REVIVING IT.

4. COLLET, INCIDENTALLY, INDICATED THAT HE HIMSELF IS LOOKING FORWARD TO VISITING US TO OBSERVE NEW TRANSPORT TECHNIQUES. HE ASSUMED THAT HE WOULD ACCOMPANY CAVAILLE IF AND WHEN LATTER MADE OFFICIAL VISIT TO US. WE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT IF AN EVENTUAL CAVAILLE VISIT WERE LONG POSTPONED IT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO COLLET TO MAKE ADVANCE VISIT ON HIS OWN, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE WOULD CERTAINLY WISH TO SPEND MORE TIME ON SURFACE TRANSPORTATION MATTERS THAN WOULD BE POSSIBLE DURING LARGELY CEREMONIAL VISIT BY HIS MINISTER.
STONE

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